LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 – 3 (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An optical information reading apparatus ~~according to claim 3~~ comprising:

an illumination optical system for projecting illumination light, elongated in a read width direction, onto an object of reading, said illumination optical system including an illumination light source made using an LED and illumination lens means made to output light incident thereon from said illumination light source while condensing and/or diffusing the incident light; and

a light-receiving optical system including a light-receiving sensor for receiving light reflected from said object of reading,

said illumination lens means including a multi-tiered lens unit in which a plurality of concave lens tiers and a plurality of convex lens tiers are alternately disposed in succession in said read width direction and a condensing lens unit for condensing said illumination light in a direction perpendicular to said read width direction, with said multi-tiered lens unit and said condensing lens unit being formed integrally with each other, and

said illumination lens means is made such that a peripheral portion of said illumination lens means and a central side portion of said illumination lens means in said read width direction differ in optical characteristic from each other so that said peripheral portion has a light diffusion range smaller than that of said central side portion,

wherein, in said illumination lens means, said multi-tiered lens unit is made such that ~~its~~ a radius of curvature of said peripheral portion of said multi-tiered lens is set to be larger than a radius of curvature of ~~varies between said peripheral portion and~~ said central side portion thereof configured to make a variation in radius of curvature vary between said peripheral portion and said central side portion ~~to produce~~ for producing the different optical characteristics.

5. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 3~~ claim 4, wherein, in said illumination lens means, said ~~rod-like~~condensing lens unit is formed to have a curved surface in said read width direction for producing the different optical characteristics.

6. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 4, further comprising a guide optical system including a guide light source for emitting laser light and a guide lens for spreading light emitted from said guide light source in said read width direction, and said guide lens is formed integrally with said illumination lens means.

7. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 4, wherein two illumination optical systems are used as said illumination optical system and disposed symmetrically with respect to said light-receiving optical system, and said illumination lens means of the symmetrically disposed illumination optical systems are integrally connected to each other through a connection portion which does not function as a lens.

8. (New) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the optical axis of said illumination light and the optical axis of said light-receiving optical system are optically disposed on the same plane.

9. (New) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of the illumination optical systems includes a plurality of the illumination light sources.

10. (New) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein a horizontal illumination range of the illumination light source is wider than a field of view of the light-receiving optical system.

11. (New) The apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising a trigger having first and second stages and in communication with the guide optical system and the illumination optical system, wherein the guide optical system is responsive to a first stage of the trigger, and the illumination optical system is responsive to a second stage of the trigger.